

Stoke Volunteer Managers Network

August 2024

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Welcome to the August edition of the Stoke Volunteer Managers Network Newsletter.

The Volunteer Managers Network is a space for people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent, an opportunity to share ideas, network and provide mutual support.

This newsletter enables us to reach those who haven't been able to attend our recent meetings, and to share any relevant information. Feel free to share amongst your networks with those you think may be interested.

If you're not already part of the network and you'd like to join, please email **volunteering@vast.org.uk**

Support & Supervision for Volunteers

A big thank you to those that attended our August meeting over Zoom. It was great that so many of you could join us. We need a venue for our meeting on 18th November from 1:30pm – 3:30pm. If you could host this meeting, please email volunteering@vast.org.uk

During the meeting we focused on supporting volunteers. Volunteers need to feel supported in their role. Often, the best way to do this is through regular 'supervision' sessions, but remember the purpose is the volunteers experience, it's not a tick box exercise!

REMEMBER:

- **Support** is about the **person**
- **Supervision** is about the **work**

A good supervision session should cover:

- Volunteers concerns
- Training needs
- What is going well and where they need extra support
- Health and safety concerns
- Practical problems
- Capacity
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Any other important information – e.g. is the role still relevant?

It's ok to use a form as a prompt but don't let it become a tick box form, listen to your volunteer.

NCVO have some great advice and guidance about Supporting Volunteers, which you can access [here](#). You could also speak to our of VAST's Projects Team to get advice on your volunteer supervision. Please email volunteering@vast.org.uk for more information.

Placements for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

One of our 'Inclusive Volunteering' projects is working with asylum seekers and refugees. These volunteers have a diverse skillset, and lots of brilliant experience. Their English-speaking ability can vary massively.

We need more volunteer opportunities that ideally:

- Don't require a DBS (it can be difficult to obtain for an asylum seeker)
- Are understanding of the barriers that they might be facing
- Suitable for a variety of English-speaking ability, i.e. a variety of roles that might be more behind the scenes or involve simple instructions (such as gardening) or more people facing roles for those who have more knowledge of the English language (such as a community café).

We would love to increase the amount of opportunities that are suitable for this client group. You can read about Johura's experience as a volunteer [here](#).

If you'd like to discuss any ideas, or have any questions, please email volunteering@vast.org.uk



Volunteers Forum

We are hosting our next Volunteers Forum on the Monday 16th September from 10am till 12:30pm at The Potteries Shopping Centre in the Community Hub (opposite New Look).

The forum is open to all volunteers. A staff member can attend with volunteers if this makes them feel more comfortable, but the forum is aimed at the volunteers themselves.

This forum will discuss the Volunteer Journey, and how it is unique for everyone.

Please note spaces are limited for this event. For more information, please click [here](#).



Meet Emma!

Emma wanted to focus on herself more, and investigated volunteering through VAST. For the last 18 months, Emma has been a volunteer with Glow, to compliment her studies at Staffordshire University.

You can read more about her experience [here](#).



Friendly Reminder

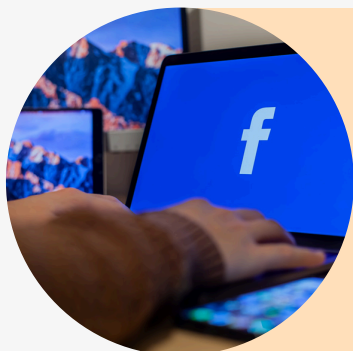
If you have volunteer roles listed on the VAST Volunteer Noticeboard, please check they are up-to-date and contact volunteering@vast.org.uk if anything needs changing.

We are always more than happy to offer free advice on role descriptions to make them more attractive to potential volunteers.



Facebook Group

Have you joined our Facebook group? Request to join [here](#) and help to grow the group by posting, commenting, and sharing volunteer opportunities. You can also get news and updates via **VAST Volunteering** on Facebook.



We would love to hear more good news stories involving the power of volunteering. If you have any you'd like to share, please send them to volunteering@vast.org.uk



VAST Volunteering Quality Standards

Our free scheme provides a framework which organisations can work towards accreditation based on their volunteering policies and procedures, and the way they work with new and existing volunteers.

Our vision for the quality standards scheme is to instil consistent volunteer-related best practice across the whole of the local voluntary sector through structured and proactive support.

You can find the information [here](#).

Training and Events

Introduction to Volunteer Management

This course is a perfect starting point for anyone who coordinates and/or supports volunteers in any capacity, or for anyone who would like to start involving volunteers in their organisation.

For more information, and booking, please click [here](#).

VAST has a fantastic range of training planned for 2024 which you can view [here](#).



Future Meetings

Our meetings rotate between face to face or virtual, with the confirmed details and agenda coming out two weeks before each meeting.

- Monday 18th November, 1:30pm - 3:30pm, **VENUE NEEDED!**

If you have any suggestions for the agenda, or can offer a venue, please email volunteering@vast.org.uk